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A Sonnet of Fray Feliz Palavicino to the Painter El Greco.

All admirers of the portrait of Fray Feliz Palavicino, painted in 1609 by El Greco and acquired by the Museum in 1904, will be interested in the following sonnet upon the portrait, which was addressed to El Greco by Fray Feliz. The translation is by a friend of the Museum.



Fray Feliz Hortensio Palavicino *El Greco, 1699*

SONETO.

Divino Griego, de tu obrar no admira,
Que en la imagen exceda á el ser el arte ;
Sino que de ella el cielo, por templarte,
La vida, deuda á tu pincel, retira.
No el sol sus rayos por su esfera gira,
Como en tus lienzos ; basta el empenarte
En amagos de Dios ; entre á la parte
Naturaleza, que vencerse mira.
Emulo á Promethéo en un retrato,
No afectes lumbre ; el hurto vital dexa,
Que hasta mi alma á tanto ser ayuda.
Y contra veinte y nueve anos de trato,
Entre tu mano, y la de Dios, perplexa,
Qual es el cuerpo, en que ha de vivir duda.

Translation :

O Greek divine ! We wonder not that in thy works
The imagery surpasses actual being,
But rather that, while thou art spared, the life that 's
due
Unto thy brush should e'er withdraw to heaven.

The sun does not reflect his rays in his own sphere
As brightly as thy canvasses. Thou dost
Essay, and like a god succeed. Let nature try :
Behold her vanquished and outdone by thee !
Thou rival of Prometheus in thy portraiture,
May'st thou escape his pain, yet seize his fire :
This does my soul for thee most ardently desire ;
And after nine and twenty years of life,
Betwixt thy hand and that of God she stands
perplexed,
And doubts which is her body, where to
dwell.

The Lecture Room.

In advocating in 1891 a lecture room for the Museum, Mr. Brimmer wrote (Annual Report, p. 4) :

"The Trustees, had they the means, could now take a further step of great importance towards affording instruction in the Fine Arts. The collections in some departments are so large and cover so wide a range in the history of the Arts that they can be most profitably studied with the aid of the teaching and guidance of thoroughly qualified men. Such teaching could well be offered by our curators in their respective departments and by others possessed of special knowledge. There comes, from various quarters, a great and growing demand for this sort of instruction, which can be most advantageously given in proximity to the objects it illustrates ; but there is no place in the building in which it can be given. There seems scarcely any addition to the Museum which would now be more serviceable than a lecture-room."

The use made of the present room amply demonstrates the value of Mr. Brimmer's suggestion. During the first five months of the present year, from January 1 to May 31, the lecture room has been used on three out of every four available days, and very frequently two or three times a day. These lectures have been given by members of the Museum staff, college professors, high school teachers and teachers of drawing, members of the Committee on the Utilization of Museums of Art by Schools and Colleges, trustees of the Museum, teachers in the Museum School, and experts in special lines. The total number of lectures was 110, and of hearers 2,266. Among the listeners have been members of women's clubs, pupils of high schools and manual training schools, as well as younger school children, students of Wellesley College and Simmons College, supervisors of drawing, the Museum staff, the Museum School, classes from private schools, classes of teachers, the Arts and Crafts Society, the Women's Educational Union, special invited guests, and members of a museum visiting committee.

Illustrative objects from the Museum collections were used in a number of the lectures, and the lantern in nearly half of them. The subjects treated were very various, covering nearly the whole range of the Museum's collections. With the end of the school year the period of the active use of the lecture room closes, but it will be available during the summer for groups of visitors.